

March 10, 2025

Dear Parish Family,

As I prepare to end my 22 years as Pastor/Administrator at Little Flower, it is only natural that I look back at all we have accomplished together during that time. Many projects have been accomplished that have improved our church, school, and parish office buildings during that time. Although the largest projects have included the replacement of crumbling brick on the church's exterior and the completion of new HVAC systems in the school and parish center, many more things have been accomplished through your generosity.

Shortly before I arrived, work was completed on the side-door windbreaks and the construction of a new gathering wall, a new reconciliation room, and a new accessible restroom in church. Later, the new accessible altar platform was constructed, and new altar furnishings and choir seating were designed and installed. I am writing today to invite and encourage your participation in one final project to mark the end of my pastorate and the beginning of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration for Little Flower Parish.

When our new church building was dedicated in 1962, the church pews from the former church (now the gymnasium) were refinished for use in the new building. Because the new church had more seating, some additional pews were fabricated to exactly match the older pews. To this day, without close examination, it is impossible to tell the difference. But the pews in our current church are all either close to 100 years old or at least 62 years old!

Our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a parish seems to be a perfect time to refinish the pews in our church. The beauty of the interior of our church is still a source of compliments from our visitors. However, if there is an area that appears to be in need of attention, it is our church pews. I think you will agree if you take a look. Their finish has been diminished over the years simply from wear. Countless people have been in and out of those pews during the 62 years since they were professionally refinished. In addition, the constant cleaning after every Mass when we reopened church during Covid had a negative effect. Today there is no way to match the quality of the pews, so it seems refinishing is the answer.

I am hoping that you will agree that this project would make a significant difference to the beauty of our church. We have some money in reserve that can be used for this project, but we are hoping to fund at least half of the project through your donations. Current estimates are between \$160,000 and \$200,000, as we also hope to have the church floors professionally refinished while the pews are removed for refinishing one section at a time. Although these estimates may seem high, they include removing the pews, transporting them to where the work will be done, and reinstalling them. It is a big job!

**Any donation that you are able to make will be appreciated, regardless of the amount.** However, every donation of \$1,000.00 will be recognized with a brass plate attached to the end of a newly refinished pew. These plates can be personalized to be used as a memorial or simply to honor an individual or family. Additionally, if you are in a position to donate more than \$1,000.00, a plate will be available for each \$1,000.00 donated. These plates will be placed randomly and will not in any way ensure that you might always be able to sit in that pew!

I am excited about the possibility of seeing this project completed, marking the end of my pastorate and the beginning of the parish's second century. I hope you will find this project worthy of your support in whatever amount is possible for you in your individual situation.

Enclosed is an envelope to be used for your donation, as well as a form about payment methods and the recognition plate(s) should your donation qualify. These envelopes can be returned to the parish center by mail or placed in the Sunday collection. I thank you for your consideration and help in making this project a reality.

I would appreciate responses by May 15, 2025. Coincidentally, May 15, 1962 was Fr. John Riedinger's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and the day the steeple was placed on our current church building!

Sincerely,

Father Robert J. Gilday  
Administrator